



## Memorandum

Date: November 10, 2011

To: West Linn Planning Commission

From: John Sonnen, Planning Director

Subject: Phase I of the Highway 43/Willamette Falls Drive corridor vision project

---

### **Purpose**

We are near the end of Phase I of the Highway 43/Willamette Falls Drive corridor vision project. At the Planning Commission meeting on November 16, 2011, staff will present the concept vision for the Highway 43/Willamette Falls Drive corridor (see Attachment 1) and related information from Phase I of the corridor vision project. Staff requests that the Planning Commission review the material and forward any comments or suggestions to the City Council. On November 21, 2011, the City Council will review the concept vision and be asked to provide direction regarding whether to pursue refinement and implementation of all or part of the concept vision components.

### **Background**

Council direction. As part of its annual goal setting in January 2011, the City Council established the following goals pertaining to the Highway 43/Willamette Falls Drive corridor:

- City staff will develop an action plan and initiate a citizen visioning process for a targeted Comprehensive Plan change affecting Highway 43 and Willamette Falls Drive;
- The City Council and staff will actively communicate this process with the community so there is understanding about the vision and involvement in the process; and
- The City will work with regional governments to achieve a satisfactory ownership and maintenance agreement for transportation corridors.

Project approach. The project approach consists of three potential phases, as follows:

- *Phase I:* Work with the community to prepare a broad brush, conceptual vision for the corridor that reflects how the community would like the corridor to evolve in the next 20-30 years and present it to the City Council for their consideration. The Council decides whether or not to pursue refinement and implementation of all or part of the concept vision. (We are at this point in the process).
- *Phase II:* If the City Council authorizes proceeding with Phase II, the approved components of the conceptual vision will be fleshed out and refined through a public process.

- *Phase III:* Implement the vision. This could include, depending on what the Council authorizes, comprehensive plan amendments; zoning map/code amendments; design guidelines; and recommended catalytic public investments.

Overview of Phase I. Staff began the project last spring and hired the consulting firm Crandall Arambula on May 26, 2011. During Phase I, staff and the consultants worked with the community to perform the following tasks:

- *Background research.* The project team conducted background research including:
  - Documenting existing physical constraints (e.g., steep slopes, wetlands and riparian areas) and opportunities that have a bearing on planning for the area (see <http://westlinnoregon.gov/vision/opportunities-and-constraints>); and
  - Compiling and analyzing the guidance from Imagine West Linn, the Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan, the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans as well as Metro and State regulations that pertain to the corridor (see <http://westlinnoregon.gov/vision/state-and-local-regulatory-considerations>).
- *Public outreach.* Staff made a concerted effort to inform and involve the community in the project. Over the summer of 2011, staff met with and surveyed residents to identify the current problems that they want addressed in the corridor, the places they want preserved or changed, and what they want to see in the corridor over the next 20-30 years. Attachment 2 documents the public outreach effort. Some of the highlights include:
  - Establishment of a project advisory committee comprised of members from throughout the study area, the Planning Commission, Economic Development Committee and the Transportation Advisory Board that advised staff and the consultant;
  - Three neighborhood meetings (Willamette, Robinwood and a joint Bolton/Sunset meeting) with a total of 45 attendees;
  - Online and telephone surveys with a total of 155 respondents; and
  - A community workshop attended by approximately 150 people.

Much of what we heard from community members through these outreach efforts confirms the general policy direction the Comprehensive Plan, Imagine West Linn and the Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan, but there are new ideas as well. Also, there seemed to be more openness to appropriate, higher density infill development near commercial areas than is indicated in some neighborhood plans. Summaries of the input from community members over the course of the summer are contained in Attachment 3. This information served as the basis for developing preliminary concepts for the future of the corridor.

At the community workshop on September 29, 2011 the project team presented the preliminary concepts for the future of the corridor and related background information to the workshop attendees. Then the attendees participated in round table discussions and indicated on a response sheet whether or not they liked the concepts, identified other ideas and reported the preferences of the group at each table. The results of the community workshop are contained in Attachment 4.

- *Concept vision.* The key concepts for the future of the corridor that were supported by the majority of those participating in the community workshop are reflected in the draft concept vision contained in Attachment 1. This document also identifies some of the opportunities and barriers associated with implementing each of the vision components.

Potential implementation approaches. Attachment 5 identifies the components of the concept vision and possible implementation approaches. If the Council decides to proceed with the concept vision we will have to prioritize and phase the work, unless additional funding is made available.

**Other issues:**

Proposed amendments to the Transportation Planning Rule. The current state Transportation Planning Rule is intended to protect the state highways and interchanges from increased traffic congestion. It has had the effect of stifling compact development called for by Metro 2040 and local plans in the Metro region. Proposed amendments to the Transportation Planning Rule currently out for public comment would eliminate consideration of traffic congestion on state highways for new development and redevelopment proposals more than 1/4 mile from highway interchanges. If adopted, this rule change would enable higher density urban development along Highway 43 and I-205, if desired, than would otherwise be the case.

Staff capacity/available funding. In 2012, the Planning Department has roughly 1.5 FTE staff and approximately \$80,000 available for Phase II of the project. If the City is successful in getting state funding to update the Transportation System Plan in mid-2012 many of the transportation related components can be largely addressed through that effort. Staff will research grants that may be available to help fund desired project components.

**Options:**

1. Consider the concept vision and identify any ideas or concerns you want the council to be aware of and identify the vision components you think the City should pursue and your priorities.

**Attachments:** 1. Concept Vision and General Feasibility Assessment

2. Public outreach activities
3. Public input prior to community workshop
4. Public input at community workshop
5. Implementation possibilities